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## CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY (XV.).

## ANCIENT MEXICAN MOSAIC WORK.

SLIGHT attempts at inlaying with shells, mica and the like, are not unfamiliar in the art of the northern native tribes of America; but nowhere else on the continent was the technique so developed as in Mexico. This is beautifully illustrated in an excellent monograph by Mr. Charles H. Read, of the British Museum, in 'Archæologia' (Vol. LIV.), on 'An Ancient Mexican Head-piece coated with Mosaic.' His scope is much more extensive than his title. Not only does he describe accurately the piece referred to, and give a large colored engraving of it, but he deals with all the known and accessible relics of the kind, eight in number, figuring and explaining them minutely. As it has long been doubted whether true turquoise is to be found in Mexico, Mr. Read adds a note from Mr. Rudder, of the Museum of Practical Geology, in which that question is answered positively in the affirmative. This monograph should be consulted by all who would understand the real advances made by the Nahuas and their neighbors in the fine arts.

## EUSKUARIAN ETHNOLOGY.

FEW ethnic problems are more complicated than that of the Euskuarians, or Basques, of the Pyrenees.

The lexicon of their language is practically Aryan, while its grammar is as un-Aryan as could well be imagined; physically they differ from their neighbors in well-defined traits, and also between each other in a not less positive degree.

A most valuable contribution on the somatologic side has appeared recently in *L'Anthropologie* by Dr. R. Collignon, surgeon-major in the French army and a distinguished anthropologist. He succeeds in clearing away the obscurities arising from the misapprehensions of Broca and other older observers, and establishes the real

Basque type. His conclusion is, "that the true physical traits of the Basques attach them indisputably to the great Hamitic branch of the White Race, to that represented by the Berbers and ancient Egyptians; and not at all, as some have argued, to the Esthonians or Finns. The Basque affinities are North African or European, certainly not Asiatic."

This conclusion, thus announced by one of the highest authorities, is substantially that expressed in my 'Races and Peoples,' published in 1890 (page 142).

## MAYAN HIEROGLYPHICAL STUDIES.

It is pleasant to note the amount of attention now shown to the decipherment of the hieroglyphical writings of the ancient Mayas. A brief notice of some late papers on this branch may be welcome.

In July Dr. E. Förstemann issued the fifth part of his researches entitled 'Zur Entzifferung der Mayahandschriften.' It is devoted to a definition of the astronomical and ritual years of the Mayas, based largely on analyses of the Dresden manuscript.

An article by Dr. E. Seler, in *Globus*, Bd. 68, No. 3, is upon the significance of the Maya calendar for the historical chronology of Yucatan. It is characterized by that keen-sighted erudition which Dr. Seler possesses, and is a contribution of great merit.

The same writer, in the *Verhand. der Berliner Anthropol. Gesell.* has discussed the bat-god of the Mayas and also explained the symbols and glyphs on a vase found at Chamá by Mr. Dieseldorff.

*The American Anthropologist* for July contains a careful article by Mr. J. Walter Fewkes on "The god 'D' in the Codex Cortesiànus." He differs from the conclusions I have expressed in my 'Primer of Mayan Hieroglyphics,' and the question is probably not closed by either of us.

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